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COUNCILMEMBER WHITBURN SEEKS TOWING PROTECTIONS

As the City reviews its various service fees, the Councilmember wants to see protections written into towing company contracts to minimize the number of people who lose their cars.

SAN DIEGO -- At today's meeting of the San Diego City Council, Councilmember Stephen Whitburn asked that a proposed fee increase for the City's Managed Tow Program go back to the Budget and Government Efficiency Committee.

"If you can't afford to get your car out of the impound lot, the impound company will sell it, and after fees owed on the vehicle to the City are paid off, the impound company keeps the rest of the profit," said Councilmember Whitburn. "I am concerned about the City being part of a process that leads to low-income residents losing their cars, and private companies profiting from that."

When a car is towed, car owners are required to pay administrative fees to the City, towing company charges, impound lot charges, and whatever other citations or fines they have related to the vehicle. And many people are unable to come up with the funds needed to get their car back so they lose it.

Today's action by Councilmember Whitburn, which was passed unanimously by Council, requests that the Managed Tow Program fee increase proposal go back to the Budget and Government Efficiency Committee to explore ways to make the towing program less financially burdensome on car owners.

"I would like to see what protections we can write into those contracts to minimize the number of people who lose their cars," Councilmember Whitburn said.

Councilmember Stephen Whitburn represents San Diego's Third Council District, which includes the communities of Downtown, Little Italy, Bankers Hill, Mission Hills, Middletown, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, Old Town, South Park, and Golden Hill.

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